

U.S. special envoy sees hope in Sudanese peace talks

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Before leaving to observe the next round of peace talks on Sudan's civil war, U.S. diplomatic troubleshooter Melissa Wells said Thursday that she detects a window of opportunity for ending the conflict that has plagued Africa's largest nation for the past 11 years and killed 1.5 million Sudanese.

Ambassador Wells, who was named special representative to Sudan by President Clinton last May, told a briefing at the State Department that her plan is to visit the region and attend the next round of Sudanese peace talks that open in Nairobi, Kenya on Sept. 5.

What is "extremely significant," Ms. Wells said, is that during the last negotiations which took place in July to August, the government in Khartoum discussed for the first time since independence in 1956 "the two underlying problems" to the conflict. She cited these as being the right of the people of southern Sudan to decide "what form of government they wish to live under" and the issue of "religion and the state."

"I'm not saying the millennium has arrived," she noted, but "I found it very healthy that the doors and windows... were all opened" to discuss topics that were considered taboo before, "a good sign" for political settlement.

(In 1993 Amnesty International charged Sudan with the "ethnic cleansing" of the Nuba people of southern Sudan and of gross human rights violations in other parts of the southern war zone. North-South talks brokered by the Nigerian government in 1992-93 in Abuja ended without result. The current Sudan peace talks in Nairobi are sponsored by the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) which includes: Somalia; Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda).

Ms. Wells, a career diplomat and former ambassador to Mozambique who has made two trips to the region

since her appointment, said the U.S. government is now giving its full backing to the IGADD process" and to the nations of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda who are active mediators in the peace process.

Asked about the armed conflict in southern Sudan, Ms. Wells acknowledged that "the war in Sudan continues. However, on July 22 the government announced a unilateral ceasefire and this was followed a few days later by the southern factions. It got off to a rocky start but it is still holding."

Unfortunately, she added, "serious fighting still continues among the southern-based SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army) factions."

This split in the southern faction is "absolutely devastating in terms of what it means to the peace process," Ms. Wells said, and is something that "those of us on the outside who are trying to bring peace to the country are stressing over and over again to the southern faction."

While famine, which came about by "factional fighting among the southerners," has been largely averted in the region known as the "Hunger Triangle," Ms. Wells said "the threat of death by famine is (still) a very real one."

Explaining that the U.S. government spends about \$2 million a week in humanitarian assistance to Sudan, Ms. Wells said "what is troubling is that about half of that is being spent on air transport." A topic of major interest for donors like the United States at the Sudan peace talks therefore, will be the "opening of corridors to Sudan" for relief supplies, the diplomat said.

This means pushing to implement a May 1994 agreement reached under IGADD that will open "road corridors, rail and barge transport" to the delivery of relief supplies to Sudan's stricken areas. She added that "this can never work unless there is some type of monitoring mechanism and

that is what we are working on."

Asked if U.S. displeasure toward Sudan as a country supporting terrorism would change because of its recent extradition to France of the international terrorist "Carlos the Jackal," Ms. Wells responded that while "the question of Carlos never came up in any of my discussions" with the Sudanese, "I have reiterated the U.S. government's longstanding policy" on countries supporting terrorism and emphasized that it remained "a major obstacle to the betterment of relations between the two countries."

Ambassador David Shinn, Director of the State Department's Office of East African Affairs, agreed that the release of Carlos is "a welcome step" but that "a lot of other issues concerning terrorism vis-a-vis Sudan remain. He said that the U.S. will "continue to push on the Sudanese to grapple with these problems in addition to some of the human rights issues. So, the overall question of support for terrorism has not gone away, it's still very much there."

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Pressed on whether the release of Carlos meant Sudan was "divesting itself of terrorists," Mr. Shinn replied that although "we would hope that happens" it was far too early to say. "The turning over of Carlos to the French is only several days old now and we do not have any evidence to suggest that this is the beginning of something bigger to come," the official said.

Asked about relations between Libya and Sudan, Mr. Shinn commented that "we have the impression that relations frankly are not particularly warm at the moment. They have run hot and cold (and) I think the current government in Khartoum is one

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New Sri Lanka premier sworn in

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka installed Chandrika Kumaratunga of the People's Alliance as its second woman prime minister Friday but the defeated United National Party kept control of the armed forces.

President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, a United National Party (UNP) nominee who faces a separate presidential poll in November, retained the defence portfolio when the 23-member cabinet was sworn in.

Prime Minister Kumaratunga, whose mother Suma Bandaranaike was the world's first woman prime minister, has vowed to end the 11-year-old civil war in which over 30,000 people have been killed.

The defence portfolio is crucial to how the government deals with the insurgency by guerrillas seeking a homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east.

But political analysts said they believed Mr. Wijetunga, who can assign himself any

cabinet post, would not obstruct the People's Alliance (PA). The PA's Anuruddha Ratwatte, Mr. Bandaranaike's cousin, was sworn in as deputy defence minister.

Sri Lankans, who voted to end the UNP's 17-year reign at Tuesday's polls, began returning to work Friday and shops reopened after a 55-hour post-election curfew elapsed. But fears of violence meant few markets were open and fewer buses operating.

Ms. Kumaratunga wore a bright blue sari, the colour of her Sri Lanka Freedom Party which is the main component of the PA. She took the oath of office in a simple ceremony at the president's residence and was also sworn in as minister of finance and planning.

The 49-year-old Kumaratunga, who wants to talk to Tamil rebels to end their bloody campaign for independence, also took control of a new portfolio, ethnic affairs and national integration.

Ms. Kumaratunga later

worry about," FSK spokesman Vladimir Kamorovski said.

"Our service has registered no theft of uranium or plutonium from Russian nuclear facilities, he said.

Meanwhile in Brussels Friday, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher discussed the suspected smuggling of nuclear material from Russia with his counterparts from Britain, France and Germany, U.S. diplomats there said.

The four ministers were in the Belgian capital for a memorial service for NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner, who died Saturday of cancer.

On Thursday, the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) confirmed that six grammes of plutonium seized in May by German police came from a Russian nuclear complex.

Plutonium is a deadly radioactive metal used in making nuclear bombs and even small amounts are toxic enough to poison a city's water supply.

The announcement Thursday that Russian police had arrested three people in Kalingrad who were attempting to sell a 60-kilogramme (132-pound) lead container of radioactive material was the latest in a spate of similar discoveries.

Mr. Barker said the row

may simply be the result of bad communication and that the Russian government was now at least ready to discuss the possibility that its nuclear network was supplying the black market.

A senior U.S. official said that the plutonium seized in Germany over the past four months is not weapons grade and probably came from a research reactor, conflicting with European analysis of the material.

The official also said there is no evidence that a black market has developed for such nuclear material but said U.S. officials are concerned that it is showing up.

"(Through) the levels of risk of very serious diversion are quite low, that does not mean it is not an issue of the highest priority for us," said the official, who briefed reporters on condition she not be identified.

"We are breaking into the international market and we are ready to sell our uranium and our nuclear fuel for the nuclear power stations. These accusations are designed to sink our prestige on the international markets," said Georgi Kaurov, spokesman at the Atomic Energy Ministry.

It is the West "which must prove the Russian origin of the plutonium and not us who must justify ourselves," he said.

She said the nuclear material in one of the seizures was too rich with plutonium-239 to be used to make a bomb and the others were too low.

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World News

Zealander
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INGTON (R) — A New Zealander died in an unusual funeral — his own. Chair-bound Alan 66, pre-recorded his service for 120 with readings from a selection of including his theme books. Mr. Kearns, 1 of cancer Thursday, south Island city of Christchurch, wrote his own obituary announcing he's this world for a place, or if not, at least another climate. Mr. had planned to save his funeral fees, thwarted because authorities did not body lying around or a cab, a spokesman said. Simplex said.

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(RPF) Interior Minister Seth Sendashonga in a reconciliation bid, at Cyangugu stadium. Some 3,000 Hutsus came up on the site (AFP photo)

Seoul said drawing up contingency plans for N. Korean collapse

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam has ordered government agencies to draw up contingency plans for any sudden collapse of the regime in North Korea, officials said Friday.

Yonhap News Agency said the contingency plans included the drafting of new laws, a constitution for a unified armed Korea and the forming of unified armed forces.

Under the order, each government ministry started taking a fresh look at various scenarios and problems expected to follow a collapse, a presidential aide said.

Each of government agencies had already prepared various scenarios and plans and the order galvanized them into considering the most comprehensive and realistic ones," the aide, Park Jim, said.

On Thursday, Mr. Kim told members of his ruling Democratic Liberal Party: "No one knows who unification may come. We should make preparations for sudden unification."

The government also wants to ensure military preparedness and an improved U.S.-South Korea joint defense posture in case the North should resort to a surprise attack against the South our

of frustration, Yonhap said. Analysis are divided over how long the Stalinist North could last in the face of deepening economic woes and world isolation.

Some analysts predict the North would survive only for the next few years. But Kim Dae-Jung, a retired opposition leader-turned-expert on the unification issue, has said the North's self-reliant economy could survive a long time even without outside support.

North Korea's official media Friday referred for the first time to the "haggard" appearance of leader designate Kim Jong-Il, increasing speculation about his health.

Last month Mr. Kim, 52, was shown at the funeral of his father, Kim Il-Sung, looking frail and pale.

After she "saw the haggard face of the dear leader Kim Jong-Il" on the TV screen during the mourning period, a nine-year-old girl decided to write him a letter, said a Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) dispatch, monitored in Tokyo.

India: Pakistan behind nuclear smuggling

NEW DELHI (R) — India said Friday the discovery of smuggled plutonium in Germany confirmed its belief that Pakistan was secretly acquiring material for nuclear weapons.

Berlin police said they found evidence of planned or successful shipments of plutonium to Pakistan during raids of seven apartments around the city Wednesday.

"This only goes to confirm what we have repeatedly said, that Pakistan has a clandestine nuclear programme and continues to acquire, through questionable means, such material as is necessary for such activity," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

Indian deputies called for an official inquiry into the alleged smuggling by Pakistan.

"Nuclear terrorism cannot be allowed in the subcontinent," Jaswant Singh, head of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, told the lower house of parliament.

"Let the government share information on the issue with the members."

The Pakistani government denied it was linked to any conspiracy to smuggle plutonium from Germany.

The Indian Foreign Ministry said Pakistani agencies had made earlier bids to acquire weapons-grade nuclear material in the United States and the Netherlands.

The threat of nuclear weapons has long clouded relations between India and Pakistan, which have fought three wars since they gained independence in 1947.

India tested an atomic device in 1974 but says it has no nuclear bomb. Pakistan denies it has a nuclear weapon but says it can build one.

Western diplomats believe both countries could easily assemble nuclear devices.

India has balked at signing the international nuclear non-proliferation treaty, set to be extended next year, saying it discriminates against non-nuclear powers.

Pakistan has proposed a regional pact barring nuclear weapons from South Asia, with the United States, Russia and China providing guarantees. India has declined the offer, citing threats from China.

It did not say what sanctions, if any, would be taken.

15,000 Rwandans cross into Zaire

GENEVA (Agencies) — Rwandan refugees are pouring over the border into Zaire at the rate of 30 per minute and may total 15,000 by the end of the day, the United Nations said Friday.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also said Zaire had informed the agency a few days ago it would close its border with Rwanda if an exodus resembled a "Goma-like situation" — a reference to the Zairean border town of Goma where 800,000 people are stranded in disease-ridden camps.

Relief agencies, including the UNHCR, fear a huge mass movement of displaced persons ahead of Monday's withdrawal of French troops from a "safe zone" in southwestern Rwanda.

A UNHCR official who has just returned from the region told a news briefing Friday: "An exodus from Bukavu would be a tragedy worse than Goma."

The official added: "The world does not have a long attention span. The logistical and humanitarian situation in Bukavu is very complicated and Zaire is already exhausted."

UNHCR is running five camps for 850,000 refugees near Goma, where epidemics of cholera and dysentery have claimed 32,000 lives.

UNHCR said earlier that between 2,000 and 6,000 had crossed over Thursday.

It has warned that there are insufficient facilities to accommodate a fresh outflow of refugees to Bukavu, already home to some 320,000 Rwandans who fled in an earlier wave.

However, the agency has identified three new sites for establishing camps near Bukavu, with capacity of 100,000.

Zairean authorities told UNHCR: "a couple of days ago" it would seal off borders if there was an exodus, according to the spokesman.

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"We have heard Zaire will close the border if there is a Goma-like situation, for reasons of safety and security... We have not heard they are definitely closing it today," she said.

U.N. troops are to take over from departing French troops to protect Hutsus who feared a backlash from the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and fled to the southwest after the RPF installed a new government on July 18.

A UNICEF official who has just returned from the region told a news briefing Friday: "An exodus from Bukavu would be a tragedy worse than Goma."

The official added: "The world does not have a long attention span. The logistical and humanitarian situation in Bukavu is very complicated and Zaire is already exhausted."

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1973

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Tourism at a profit

MINISTER OF TOURISM Mohammad Adwan's admission Thursday that "we are behind the Israelis in tourism" is both courageous and encouraging. It represents the beginning, we hope, of the journey to rectify the problem and put the country on the right road to reaping the fruits of peace.

The reasons why Jordan is far behind many countries in the tourism industry are many. Chief among them is the absence of any tourism culture in this country as a whole and the government's complete control of touristic sites and outlays.

If we should only take Petra as an example, we could see how the authorities have mishandled that precious site and how on the home stretch to peace the private sector made strides to prepare the Petra region for the influx of tourists while the government kept itself way behind, in the back pack, as it were.

In the past year the private sector managed to make ready a complete five-star tourist village, Taybet Zaman, and started building half-a-dozen others. The government, meanwhile, did nothing to enlarge the roads leading to the ancient city, to provide decent forms of transportation through the Siq that leads to the ruins, to provide amenities or to install the necessary infrastructure for the anticipated influx of tourists.

The only move that the government made, and perhaps too hastily, was to raise by 400 per cent the fees to entering Petra, a step that is coming under increasingly heavy criticism from tour operators, potential visitors and concerned citizens.

What tourism needs, like all other service industries in the Kingdom, is total independence from the government and the treasury. Tourism, like telecommunications and television, will always be restrained by the fact that whatever income it brings goes to the treasury which only releases handouts to be spent on the sector. For this reason the Tourism Authority needs to be resurrected first and restructured as an independent and autonomous body that includes representatives of both the public and private sectors. The Ministry of Tourism should only act as a regulatory body and a distributor of tourism-generated funds.

The Tourism Authority should be entrusted to operate at a reasonable profit margin and should have a mandate to oversee all touristic activity at all sites. The authority should draw on foreign experience and foreign expertise at least in the initial years of operation.

What we need to realise first and foremost is that tourism is a far more sophisticated industry than all others because it caters for people's comfort, taste and leisure. And for that reason alone it should not be trusted to governments, because bureaucracies, by nature, cannot meet people's sophisticated needs.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily called on the Ministry of Tourism to reconsider its decision of raising the fee for tourists visiting Petra to JD 20, up from JD 5 mistakenly quoting the old figure as JD 1. Tareq Masarweh said that JD 1 is little but JD 20 is too much to ask from a tourist visiting cultural and archaeological sites in the Kingdom. A tourist is not a millionaire and he or she could be students coming from Europe or America and staying in modest hotels, noted the writer, saying that the Tourism Ministry is trying to earn for the country as much income from tourism as possible. The writer said that the ministry is not offering services to the tourists worth the JD 20. The writer said that many tourists have been complaining about the exorbitant fees they are forced to pay like staying in Palmyra hotel in Syria where they pay \$280 per night, and there is no need for us to hear similar complaints nor are we in need of scaring off the tourists whose financial resources are limited but their spending should benefit our national economy.

In the view of Taher Al Udwan peace with Israel means the end of Israeli aggression on the Arab Nation but one cannot expect from Israel to be much of benefit for Arab economy. Israel and the United States aim from this peace is to open Arab markets for Israeli goods in exchange for a pledge not to keep expanding the Jewish state at the expense of the Arab World, said the writer. If we want to have peace that can be sustainable, we the Arabs ought first to achieve peace among ourselves as Arab governments and peoples and we ought to open our markets to have a common market and common and strong economy, said the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

Preparing for the economic challenge

By Dr. Musa Keilani

IN LESS than two months' time, events have propelled Jordan into the centre-stage of Middle Eastern politics, inviting international focus on the Kingdom, what it stands for in political terms and what it can offer in terms of business opportunities.

Expectations are high that hundreds of millions of investments will be coming to the country, infrastructure services will be improved simultaneously and all of us could see a tangible rise in the standard of living and a tension-free life away from the preoccupation with the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Projects worth billions of dollars have been drawn up with many avenues of possible financing, and international investors are taking varying degrees of interest in figuring out how far they should or could go in involving themselves in Jordan.

Here is the major challenge facing ourselves. It is not enough that we have made the necessary political moves towards ending decades of conflict and clearing the way for a normal life and living for us; we have to work extra hard to prove it to the international community that our country offers the right climate and opportunities for investments, both direct and indirect.

Quite simply, we cannot afford to wait. With many other regional conflicts settled down in Asia and elsewhere, it is quite clear that there is an international race for international investments. Goodwill is not enough to convince international investors to channel their funds. The country should have the right ingredients to offer to investors, including incentives, clear-cut rules and regulations needed to consolidate the institutionalisation of democratic practices.

Such reminders are not new, and Jordan has indeed taken major steps to address the shortcomings in its

structure for foreign investments over the years, with amendments to the related legislation and setting up committees to improve the situation further.

But the situation today remains far from being satisfactory, as many international investors assert. Again, that does not mean that we have to start all over again and go through months if not years of laborious work on revising our laws and incentives. On the contrary, the situation needs today is a series of finishing touches.

Those finishing touches start with moving away from scrutinising the internal scene with an internal perspective to an external perspective to assess what would an international investor see as an ideal climate for putting in money into projects in Jordan. We have no dearth of experts in this field. Indeed, those experts are part of the human wealth we have and are proud of.

The first thing any investor would like to know is whether conflicts threaten the environment for investments in any country and how sound the political and economic system is. Then the question comes whether funds channelled into a country could be retrieved as easily as they were pumped in and how easy or difficult it is to repatriate profits and the possible constraints in this context. Then comes an assessment of returns and short-, medium- and long-term prospects.

On the first count, the steps adopted by Jordan after decades of reaffirming its quest for a negotiated settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict do go a long way in reassuring investors. As to the political system, the democracy in Jordan offers the best answer although more steps are needed to consolidate the institutionalisation of democratic practices.

As far as our economic system goes, our moves in the past few years towards a free-market economy have to be further solidified with as little constraints as possible. In the

short-term, such moves may be seen as contradictory to our monetary situation, but the fruits of a free market economy are much more attractive and rewarding in the medium- and long-term. Built-in features to protect our monetary situation are well understood and should not be discouraging to investors since they themselves understand those requirements, which will not be unique to Jordan or any other country with features similar to ours. But over and above everything else, we have to instill confidence at the international level that investors would be binding themselves into irreversible commitments in the Kingdom if they come in with capital.

Simultaneous to the executive and legislative moves, another key area of action is developing the culture of peace amongst us. Ironical as it is, history has proved that waging peace is more difficult than waging war. Our people, who are slowly waking up to the reality that we would be dealing with someone who has been an enemy for decades, have to be familiarised in close terms as to what a change in attitude would bring and that the returns would be worth the sacrifices that they, as a country and people, have made over the years.

We cannot afford to live in the past. Realities challenge us today. Those realities demand that we change ourselves with clear steps and drawing lines. Developing a culture of peace is not easy, but it has to be done if we are to live up successfully to what is expected of a small country with a large potential.

We have to work hard and fast. Jordan has to catch up with the rest of the world opening up to investment opportunities and if we lag behind, we stand to lose the race. That is the challenge facing those who are in charge of implementing the decisions of our leadership to open up our economy.

Russia: Quiet summer, stormy fall?

By Dave Carpenter
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Lulled by a hot summer, Russia is outwardly calm these days. Some say deceptively so.

The newly renovated White House masks all traces of last October's barrage by government tanks and gleams above the Moscow River as barges glide past. Opinion polls show "social tension" declining nationwide. Even nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky is relaxing, cruising down the Volga.

Enjoying a balmy August and the most stability of the last three, tumultuous years, many Russians would like to relegate political upheaval to history.

People are tired of all the strife, "Marina Kozareva, a bank employee, said between puffs on a cigarette on the embankment across from the White House. "I can't see another showdown happening again any time soon."

The public has grown more mature, and no one will now support any such conflicts," agreed Mikhail Poluchin, a retired military officer sitting on a park bench nearby.

But the economy still in turmoil and crime and unemployment rising, some signs suggest trouble in the fall. Russia's traditional time for revolutions and political tumults.

"One more month until the autumn of revolt and upheavals" thundered a hopeful headline in Zavtra, the radical opposition newspaper hawked in metro stations and on street corners.

Government plans to allow the bankruptcies of thousands of large enterprises could anger millions of idled workers. Labour leaders are urging a nationwide general strike on Sept. 21.

Parliament, weaker and so far less insolent than its predecessor, is poised to finally adopt its own privatisation law and emergency economic measures when it reconvenes in October — a direct challenge to the government.

The industrial lobby and many legislators support a growing movement to oust Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin over what they see as overly rigid financial policies. Simultaneously, analysts say, continuing pressure to provide more money for the strapped military and agricultural industry risks sending inflation, now down to about 100 per cent annually, spiraling back out of control.

Expert observers are split over whether the current tranquility is misleading or merely confirms what President Boris Yeltsin recently called a new

political reality — perhaps even the beginnings of a "Russian economic miracle," as some Western analysts have suggested.

"We still have some difficult problems, certainly," said Mikhail Berger, a columnist for the newspaper Izvestia. "But the situation in general is out as bad as was predicted six months or a year ago. We see no evidence of hyperinflation, social conflict or mass unemployment."

The "near-normal" political situation, as Mr. Berger described it, is notable in itself in a country that in the last three years has endured both the August 1991 putsch and last year's bloody street battles between government troops and parliamentary foes holed up in the White House.

Mr. Yeltsin's bold on power appears safe until 1996 presidential elections. The opposition remains splintered, and a communist leader grumbled publicly this month about people's "passivity" in not turning out a force for revolution.

But Mikhail Leontyev, a columnist for the newspaper Segodnya, says the calm could be shattered soon by the anti-Chernomyrdin forces, whom he says are led by Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets.

"Chernomyrdin's enemies have been putting growing pressure on Yeltsin's office" to dump him, he said. "It may not be so hard to have Yeltsin support the move, since the president doesn't like anyone to gain too much political weight."

"If Chernomyrdin is ousted it would definitely exacerbate the economic situation. So far, it has been enough for the government just to sit back and not make foolish decisions to continue financial stabilisation," Mr. Leontyev said.

One figure did stir Russians' passions and protests this lazy summer: Lyonya Golubkov, the fictional get-rich-quick star MMM commercials. The collapse of the giant investment fund burned millions of investors, and critics said it reflected the government's failed economic policies.

"Having suppressed the opposition, Yeltsin's government has only succeeded in driving social protest deep under the surface," said Georgy Shukin, a long-time adviser to former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev who works for the Gorbachev Foundation.

"Now the opposition is half-strangled and of no political importance. But one day it may blow up in the government's face in the form of labour actions and rallies," he said.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Israel is seeking an unfair deal

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

THE MAJORITY of the columnists in the Arabic press criticised Israel's stand vis-a-vis the peace process, accusing it of aiming to achieve its objectives without giving back Arab rights.

Peace is tempting for all when it aims at truly achieving stability and progress and end the state of poverty and unemployment but dreams are something and realities are something else, said Walid Abu Baker in Al Dustour. It is clear, said the writer, that through its negotiations with the Arab parties Israel is aiming to reap the fruit of peace for itself without leaving the Arabs anything worth talking about. Citing in particular the Palestine-self rule, the writer said that Israel is clearly aiming to create an entity under its hegemony and each day that passes proves that this perception is right. He said there is no alternative for the Arab parties but to adopt a collective stand and deal with the Israeli party through a single policy.

The writer's views were reflected by his colleague Mohammad Kawash, who accused the Israelis of creating a large prison out of the self-rule areas in Gaza and Jericho instead of granting the Palestinians their freedom. In trying to perpetuate its presence in the occupied territories, Israel is facing rising resistance and increasing counter attacks by the local population. The wrath of the people of Palestine is bound to continue and escalate as long as the occupation remains in place, said the writer.

Ziyad Barakat, a columnist in Al Dustour, directed his criticism at the Arab governments which, he said, deprived their people of meaningful development in the past four de-

years under the pretext of the Gulf war, the siege on Aqaba and unemployment and poverty and the time has come for the government to take measures that would guarantee the right path for construction, and development.

Fadel Fawek, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, criticised the Palestine National Authority for closing down two Arabic daily newspapers saying that the order for the closure was because the papers backed Jordan's views. The writer said that the closure was a political decision that should be countered with a similar measure from Jordan which, the writer said, should prevent spokesmen for the Palestine Liberation Organisation from publishing their articles in the Jordanian press.

Mohammad Sabeih, writing in Al Dustour, said corruption was still rampant in Jordan and there was a dire need for creating a special office to hold public officials to account for their sources of wealth. The writer said that senior officials whose earnings do not exceed JD 1,000 a month live extravagantly and in a manner that creates suspicions.

The writer said that there should be laws that require ministers and senior officials in the public administration to present their sources of income before assuming their posts so that the government could control corruption.

Dwelling on the same theme Mohammad Daoud, who writes for Al Dustour, said that those who abuse authorities while in public office should face severe punishment in order to put an end to corruption. While common thieves are imprisoned for stealing small amounts of money we see senior officials stealing public funds and getting away

Features

r. Musa Kellai

Dead Sea talks raise questions

(Continued from page 1)

negotiations.

"The level of bilaterals should not have been raised to the ministerial level and especially not on tourism," one senior negotiator told the *Jordan Times* on condition of anonymity.

Not only did Dr. Adwan's visit raise the level of negotiations on the bilateral level, it also redirected attention from the pressing "rights issues" to the "cooperation issues," not only in the eyes of the Israeli and international press but also on the negotiating table.

And it allowed the Israelis to register a point against the Jordanians, because it highlighted an issue on which the Israeli side wanted to make the most progress because of its normalisation nature.

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Dollar still under attack

LONDON (Agencies) — The dollar failed to break out of its downward spiral Friday amid worries over U.S.-Japan trade relations and new fears that German interest rates will remain unchanged for some time.

It began its drop Thursday after Germany's Bundesbank decided to leave key interest rates unchanged for at least another two weeks. Traders had hoped for a rate cut.

Then news that the U.S. trade deficit with Japan neared 26 per cent in June hit the market, further depressing the currency.

On Friday afternoon, Bundesbank Vice President Johann Wilhelm said the central bank had fixed a repo rate — often allowed to fluctuate — in order to dampen interest-rate speculation.

The U.S. currency ended

the week nearly two pfennings and two yen lower than last Friday after failing to respond positively to the U.S. Federal Reserve's (Fed's) credit tightening on Tuesday.

"Everyone's got the idea it's just going to go lower now, particularly with Buba (Bundesbank) not cutting and its weak performance after the Fed rate hike," said a trader at a German bank in London.

The Federal Reserve hiked U.S. interest rates by a half a percentage point but the effects were soon stifled when Deputy Treasury Secretary Roger Altman resigned over the Whitewater affair and fears emerged that the bigger rates might seriously hurt the U.S. economy.

Traders saw little prospect of a let-up in the selling press-



An electrical board flashes the current trading figures during the Friday morning session of the foreign exchange market in Tokyo. The U.S. dollar opened at 98.69 yen, 1.19 yen lower than the previous finish. (AFP photo)

ure currently hitting the dollar against the yen ahead of a Sept. 30 deadline after which Washington may enforce trade sanctions on Japan if there is no accord.

President Bill Clinton said Friday he would try to persuade the Federal Reserve to change its monetary policy if the economy begins to drag,

but intends to remain independent at the moment.

"They (the Fed) are worried about inflation," he said. "Who is it apparent to me that the drag on the economy will be more about slowing the economy down than stopping inflation, I will do what I can to influence that policy," he said.

India frees rupee on current account to end bottlenecks.

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India Friday made the rupee fully convertible on current account, removing all restrictions on the currency's conversion for overseas travel, medical expenses, gifts and services for Indian citizens.

The International Monetary Fund has been informed of the move by the government of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the central bank said in a statement.

The central bank said the

transaction on the capital account, but the rupee has been now made fully convertible on the current account, RBI officials said. It does not extend to transactions on capital account, and any outflow of funds apart from those in the current account would require approval of the Indian government, an RBI official said.

The central bank said the currency relaxation will also permit overseas Indians to remit remittances for travel, studies, medical expenses, gifts and services for overseas Indians and said it will "decide favourably" on all requests for currency conversion for other needs.

"There are indicative limits up to which the authorised dealers (banks) can make available exchange facilities without RBI's approval," the central bank said.

The currency relaxation, however, does not apply to local taxes.

"It was a long-felt demand to remove such bottle-necks and irritants from the currency," said economist Sanjeev Verma on the float of the rupee on current account.

India ordered partial convertibility of the rupee on current account last year, in line with sweeping reforms aimed at shedding four decades of quasi-socialist insulation from its economy and luring foreign capital to the country.

The rupee's float was the most radical measure in the market-friendly 1993-94 budget package, unveiled in February 1993 by Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, the architect of India's economic liberalisation programme of 1991.

The government says the free-floating rupee would stimulate overseas sales. The rupee initially fluctuated between 31 and 31.50 to the dollar after the partial float last year but gained stature against the greenback in the following days.

Iran to export liquefied gas to South Korea

TEHRAN (R) — Iran will start exporting 500,000 tonnes of liquefied gas per year to South Korea from the start of 1995, a senior official was quoted as saying.

The exports, under a deal with the South Korean firm Daewoo, are worth \$65 million a year, Ahmad Rahgozar, deputy oil minister and head of the National Iranian Petrochemical Company, said in an interview printed in Resalt newspaper.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1994
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The Full Moon in Aquarius late this evening comes too late to have much effect on your day but the Moon Square to Pluto reveals a secret, stifles emotions and makes people uneasy. Beware.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Look over your environment and make plans for improvement. Make contacts which will improve your social life in the near future.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be sure not to disturb anyone who has power over your affairs or you could regret it later. Safeguard your reputation from harm.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be sure you first investigate any new project you want to engage in. Spend your money wisely so you will have some in reserve.

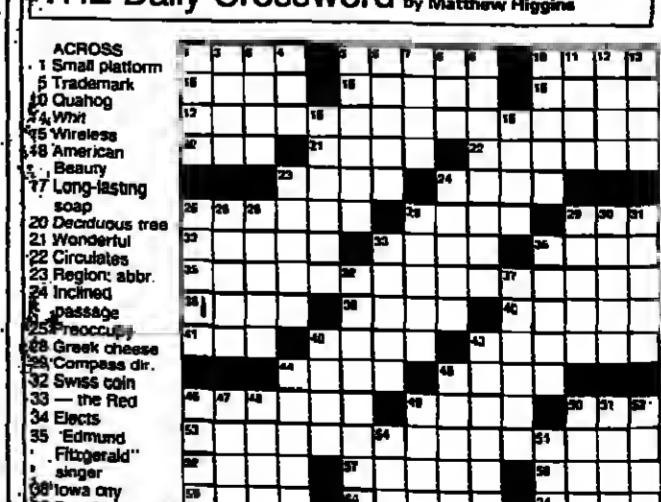
MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Some family members may not agree with your views now, so try to understand them better and you will have harmony at home.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't try to force your ideas and views on others and avoid getting unexpected rebuffs. Express happiness with congenial friends.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Make plans in have more favourable conditions around you in the days ahead. The evening is fine for social activities which you enjoy.

Birthstone of August:
Peridot — Golden Quartz

THE Daily Crossword



Business & Finance

AUGUST 20, 1994

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1994 9

Financial Markets Jordan Times
In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Current	New York Close Date 17/8/94	Tokyo Close Date 18/8/94
Sterling Pound	1.5415	1.5425
Deutsche Mark	1.5516	1.5495
Swiss Franc	1.3035	1.3010
French Franc	5.3275	5.3285
Japanese Yen	100.14	99.88
European Currency Unit	1.2225	1.2231

Current	1 MTHS Date 18/8/94	3 MTHS Date 18/8/94	6 MTHS Date 18/8/94	12 MTHS Date 18/8/94
U.S. Dollar	4.50	4.68	5.00	5.50
Sterling Pound	4.93	5.31	5.75	6.56
Deutsche Mark	4.68	4.68	4.75	5.06
Swiss Franc	3.87	4.06	4.25	4.43
French Franc	5.25	5.37	5.68	6.06
Japanese Yen	1.93	2.12	2.18	2.45
European Currency Unit	5.81	5.94	6.12	6.63

Bank bid rate for accounts exceeding 1,000 U.S. Dollars. London or equivalent

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Current	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6950	0.6970
Sterling Pound	1.0700	1.0754
Deutsche Mark	0.4475	0.4497
Swiss Franc	0.5325	0.5352
French Franc	0.1304	0.1311
Japanese Yen	0.6955	0.6990
Dutch Guilder	0.3984	0.4004
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira	0.0437	0.0439
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Per 100

Other Currencies	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.3260	1.3400
Lebanese Lira	0.046445	0.046825
Saudi Riyal	0.1850	0.1861
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3100	2.3400
Qatari Riyal	0.1895	0.1909
Egyptian Pound	0.1060	0.1220
Qatari Riyal	1.7850	1.8020
UAE Dirham	0.1885	0.1896
Greek Drachma	0.2725	0.3150
Cypriot Pound	1.3985	1.5100

Per 100

Other Currencies

Date: 18/8/1994

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Current	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.3260	1.3400
Lebanese Lira	0.046445	0.046825
Saudi Riyal	0.1850	0.1861
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3100	2.3400
Qatari Riyal	0.1895	0.1909
Egyptian Pound	0.1060	0.1220
Qatari Riyal	1.7850	1.8020
UAE Dirham	0.1885	0.1896
Greek Drachma	0.2725	0.3150
Cypriot Pound	1.3985	1.5100

Per 100

Other Currencies

Date: 18/8/1994

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Current	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.3260	1.3400
Lebanese Lira	0.046445	0.046825
Saudi Riyal	0.1850	0.1861
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3100	2.3400
Qatari Riyal	0.1895	0.1909
Egyptian Pound	0.1060	0.1220
Qatari Riyal	1.7850	1.8020
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Queen declares Commonwealth Games open; competition begins

VICTORIA, British Columbia (AP) — Pigeons flew as young girls danced amid multi-colored banners, mounted rode their horses to a musical accompaniment, Queen Elizabeth II delivered her message in French and English.

And the crowd heartily cheered the return of South Africa.

So began the XV Commonwealth Games Thursday as 3,350 athletes from a record 64 nations began 10 days of competition in this charming provincial capital on the southern tip of British Columbia's Vancouver Island.

The Jet's of Canada's Snowbirds precision flying team roared in tight formation over the makeshift stadium at the University of Victoria, where some 33,500 people gathered to watch the pageantry surrounding the queen's opening of the games. An estimated 500 million watched on television worldwide.

Competition began today in seven sports, including swimming. Some of the top swimmers in the world are entered.

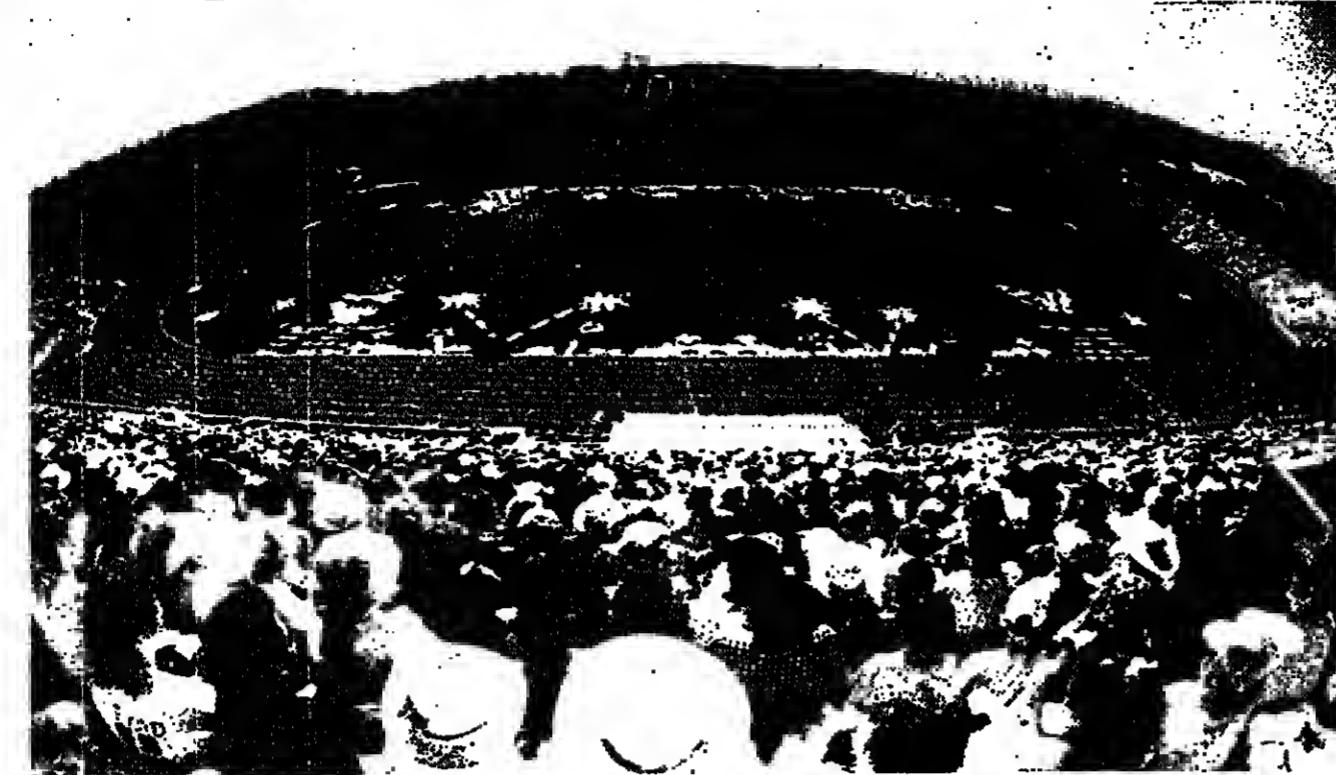
Australian Hayley Lewis will try to add to the five gold medals she won four years ago in Auckland, New Zealand.

Her countryman, Phil Rogers, the short course world record-holder, will go against 200 champion Jon Cleveland of Canada and favoured Nick Gillingham of England in the 100 breaststroke.

Another Australian, Kieren Perkins, who holds the world record at 800 and 1,500 metres, goes in the 200 freestyle.

The opening day of competition also includes badminton, boxing, gymnastics, lawn bowls, wrestling and shooting. Track and field starts Monday and weightlifting begins Tuesday.

The 2-hour opening ceremony was produced by Jacques Lemay, who also put together the opening extravaganza for the Calgary Winter Olympics in 1988. Thursday's themes were tied to the native heritage of Vancouver Island, and of the different cultures of the people of Canada.



Spectators watch the opening ceremonies of the XV Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia (AFP photo)

ganza for the Calgary Winter Olympics in 1988. Thursday's themes were tied to the native heritage of Vancouver Island, and of the different cultures of the people of Canada.

The 3,800 performers in the opening ceremony ranged in age from 6 weeks to 95 years. The baby was recruited to the choir while the oldest was an elder of the coast Salish nation, whose members officially welcomed the visitors from the former British empire to their native land.

A portion of the crowd broke out in cheers as the blue-clad South Africans entered the stadium. When the announcement said, "Ladies and gentlemen, returning to the Commonwealth of nations is South Africa," the rest of the crowd stood and cheered.

South Africa last appeared in the games in 1958. The country was booted from the Commonwealth in 1961 for its racist policies but returned in 1990. The opening day of competition also includes badminton, boxing, gymnastics, lawn bowls, wrestling and shooting. Track and field starts Monday and weightlifting begins Tuesday.

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when majority blacks were granted equal status.

The beaming athletes and officials waved dry flags from their newly integrated land.

The athletes waved as they walked past the queen. Only the delegation from Togo bowed to her.

Great Britain is represented by four delegations — from England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, whose men wore blue and red plaid kilts as they marched around the track.

Canadian Biathlete Myriam Bedard, a two-time gold medal winner in the winter Olympics at Lillehammer, Norway, brought the queen's baton into the stadium on roller blades, using ski poles to propel herself around the track.

The baton, designed by three artists from the three native "first nations" of Vancouver Island, left Buckingham Palace in London on March 14 and was taken to all

regions of the Commonwealth.

After the baton was presented to the queen, she read the message it contained declaring the games officially open.

"We know that we can expect 10 days of fine sporting achievement at the venues, the traditional comradeship of the games' village and the excitement and happiness that comes from the meeting of athletes from all parts of the Commonwealth," the queen said.

"I greatly look forward to my stay here and wish you all a successful and joyful games."

The queen and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, entered the stadium in a 1939 Buick convertible. They joined their son, Prince Edward, the president of the Commonwealth Federation; Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and other dignitaries to watch the ceremony.

mon.

Sir Roger Bannister, who ran the first sub-4-minute mile in 1954, and his great rival, John Landy of Australia, raised the Commonwealth flag.

The loudest cheers were for the host team, whose members tossed frisbees into the crowd.

New Zealand, which hosted the Commonwealth games four years ago, led the parade.

The Australian delegation was led by a group of disabled athletes, a response to comments by the head of the team that such athletes were an "embarrassment" to the games. Arthur Tunstall later apologized and said his remarks were taken out of context.

Hong Kong made its final appearance in the games, its delegation waving politely. Hong Kong is to be ceded to China in 1997.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

One killed in Turkish bomb blasts

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish police said a 19-year-old man was killed on Friday in the southern city of Adana when a bomb he was trying to attach to an electrical transformer exploded prematurely. Anatolia news agency quoted police as saying the man was a "terrorist," adding that a gun found on his body was linked to three murders over the past two years. The agency gave no other details. In a separate incident, a 36-year-old man lightly wounded when a time-bomb exploded outside a primary school in Istanbul. A Turkish newspaper earlier listed the school as one of six in Istanbul slated to be closed and sold by the education ministry, and police said the bombing may have been a protest against such a move.

Plot to grow 'grass' in graveyard foiled

NICOSIA (AP) — A family's plan to grow marijuanna in its cemetery plot went to pot when police nabbed Panayiotis Pascali, 42, and his son Dimitri, 16, watering four plants by the graves. "We had the plants at home, but they were doing poorly so my wife decided to take them into the open air in the graveyard to avoid getting in trouble," said Mr. Panayiotis' husband, Antonis, a 45-year-old taxi driver, when all three appeared in court Friday. After they were committed for trial for growing an illegal substance, Mr. Pascali shouted: "Why were we arrested? Smoking pot's allowed in Europe."

Cyprus wants halt to Albanian trial

NICOSIA (AP) — Parliament will appeal to world parliaments and human rights groups to intervene to stop Albania's alleged persecution of its ethnic Greek minority, officials said Friday. The appeal was prompted by the trial this week in the Albanian capital, Tirana, of five ethnic Greeks on espionage charges. "This trial is a travesty of justice and part of the persecution of the Greek minority," said Vassos Lyssardis, acting president of the Cyprus parliament composed entirely of Greek Cypriots. "We will appeal to international parliaments and human rights groups to intervene to stop the trial and the persecution," he added. Parliamentary party leaders also decided to send a delegation to Albania to observe the political-explosive trial, Mr. Lyssardis noted. The five Greeks were arrested in April following an attack by gunmen on an Albanian army training camp, killing two soldiers and wounding seven.

Two Pakistanis get Islamic justice in S. Africa

RIYADH (AP) — A Pakistani was beheaded Friday for drug smuggling and another had his hand cut off for looting, the interior ministry announced. It said Kashkhan Fati Khan, convicted by an Islamic court of smuggling heroin hidden in his intestines, was executed in the capital, Riyadh. Maatouf Alhal Banja was convicted of breaking into a depot for looting and had his right hand cut off at the wrist in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, the ministry said. Islamic law, enforced in Saudi Arabia, prescribes beheading for convicted murderers and rapists, hand-cutting for thieves, and stoning for adulterers. Saudi Arabia's leading clerics ruled in 1987 that drug smugglers and peddlers should also be executed. Death sentences are usually carried out on Fridays in public squares outside mosques after noon prayers. More than 200 people, including Saudis, Pakistanis, Nigerians and Indians, have been beheaded so far this year for murder, narcotics-related crimes and rape.

AFP also 'liberated' with Paris

PARIS (AFP) — On Aug. 20, 1944, five days before the surrender of German troops in Paris, a group of French journalists and academics burst into the offices of the Vichy-run French information office and took over, giving birth to Agence France Presse. The group of resistance members crossed Paris by bicycle and entered AFP headquarters in the early morning, escorting a Nazi censor into the basement where he was locked up. Three-and-a-half hours later the first AFP dispatch hit the wire announcing that the oldest world news agency was back in business. The news agency, formerly known as Agence Havas after its founder in 1835 Charles-Louis Havas, was dismantled by the Nazis and the news branch became the official state news agency during World War II. But AFP's international network continued to live on through the Independent French Agency based at Mr. Havas' London offices. After the liberation, the various branches were reunited to become Agence France-Presse which obtained its current status as an independent news agency by an act of parliament in 1957.

China denounces killers in Algeria

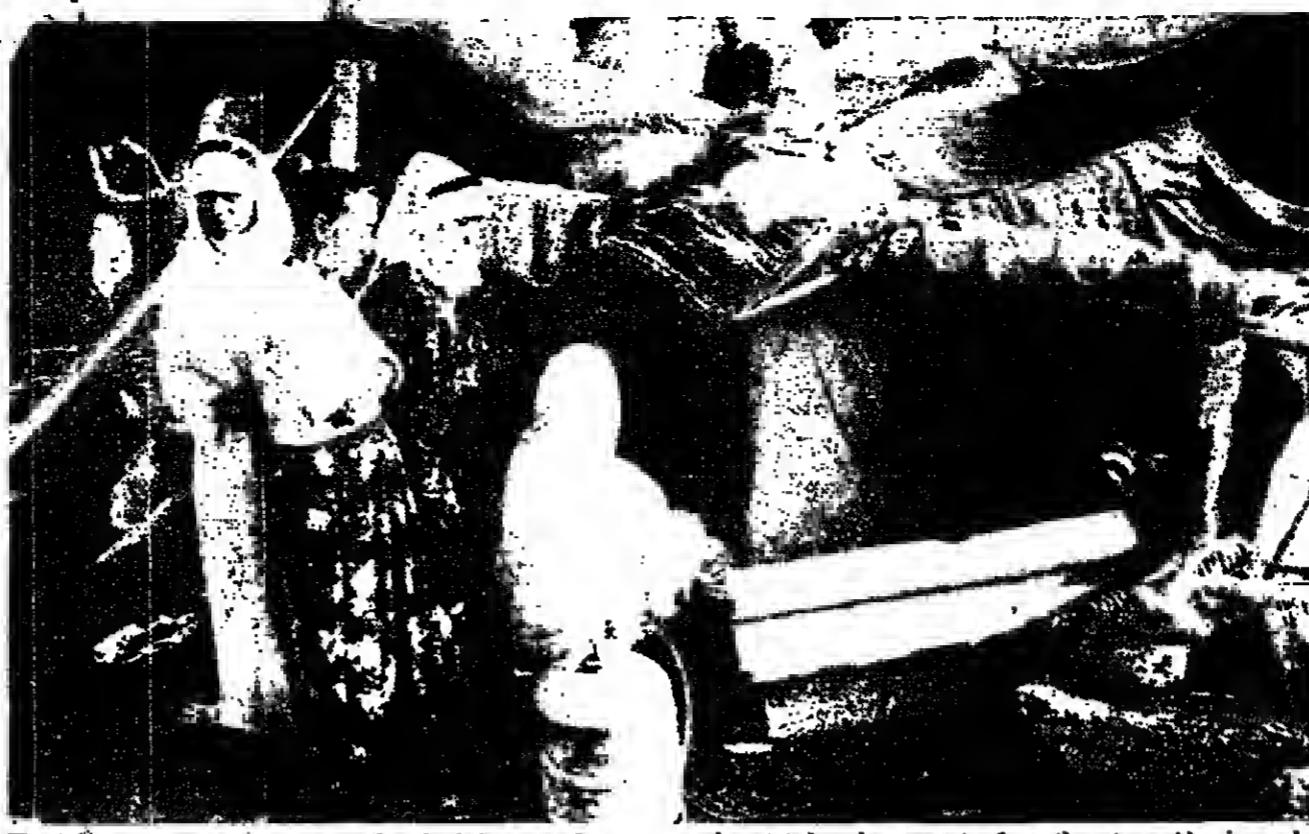
BELJING (R) — China on Friday denounced the killing of two Chinese workers in Algeria four days ago and urged the Algerian government to guarantee the safety of its citizens there. State radio on Friday quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying the two, who worked for the Chinese Foreign Water Conservancy and Power Co., were shot dead by four "terrorists" while driving to a shopping centre close to their homes. "We are shocked and deeply grieved to learn that two innocent Chinese workers were killed by terrorists in Algeria and we strongly condemn this brutal act," the spokesman said. "We hope the Algerian government will handle the incident properly and take practical, effective measures to guarantee the safety of Chinese citizens in Algeria." The Radio said Algerian security forces traded gunfire with the four gunmen, killing two on the spot. Muslim fundamentalists have been fighting Algeria's army-backed government since late 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election which the now outlawed Islamic Salvation Front looked set to win. More than 4,000 people have died in ensuing political violence and militants have told foreigners to leave the country on pain of death. The two Chinese were among some 60 foreigners killed since September last year.

Moroccan king pardons 102 on anniversary

RABAT (R) — King Hassan of Morocco has granted pardons to 102 prisoners to mark the 41st anniversary of the exiling of his father King Mohammad V by the French authorities. The Justice Ministry said in a statement on Friday. The statement did not identify the prisoners who are all common criminals. Sent into exile in Madagascar by the French protectorate authorities on Aug. 20, 1953, King Mohammad was returned to his throne on Nov. 16, 1955 and the protectorate was abolished the following March. In March this year the king commuted to life imprisonment death sentences on 195 persons and in July he amnestied 424 political prisoners and exiles. He also pardoned 249 other prisoners on public holidays earlier this year.

Iran's legendary singer leaves Iran

AMMAN (J.T.) — Marzieh, Iran's legendary artist and songstress who recently left the country, met on Thursday with Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, the Iranian resistance's president-elect, at Auver-Sur-Oise, France, the National Council of Resistance of Iran said. Marzieh, 69, learned music and the art of singing 50 years ago under some of the masters of Iranian music. Having performed some 1,000 songs in a span of half a century, she is recognised as Iran's greatest and most distinguished music star. "The mullahs' medieval dictatorship banned her from performing for the last 15 years; she never submitted to the conditions set by the criminal mullahs," said a council statement. "She left Iran to join the Iranian resistance and declare support for the resistance's president-elect." Mrs. Rajavi described Marzieh as "Iran's Um-Kolthum," a "great lady of Iran's music and song, and a 'brilliant star' of Iranian art."



Homeless gather at the entrance of makeshift tents after their homes had been destroyed by an earthquake which

devastated a large part of northwestern Algeria early Thursday (AP photo)

Algeria quake toll rises to 164

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Rescuers battled across rough terrain Friday to reach isolated victims of the earthquake which devastated much of northwestern Algeria while the provisional death toll rose from 159 to 164, officials said Friday.

The quake, which struck the mountainous Massara area before dawn Thursday, left some 1,420 families, estimated at up to 10,000 people, homeless.

Rescue and relief operations in isolated villages, some of which were wiped out by the tremor, were hampered by bad mountain roads and wide cracks in the ground, but the army used helicopters to bring in water, food and medicine.

The provisional toll of those injured remained unchanged at 289, of which 96 were still in hospital.

The quake struck early Thursday when most people were asleep in their homes.

Authorities said the army had rapidly deployed in the region to identify stricken villages and help rescue teams.

Thousands of people spent Thursday night under the stars around the levelled town of Hassine. The quake registered a preliminary magnitude of 5.6, according to Algerian officials.

Even in less-stricken areas, many people preferred to

sleep outdoors, fearing aftershocks could bring down their homes on them. No nighttime aftershocks were felt.

The Red Crescent set up a central depot in Hassine to collect donations. In France, the foreign ministry announced that the French government will send tents, blankets and medical materials.

The pre-dawn quake and aftershocks, one reaching a magnitude of 5.1, devastated a large area in Mascara, collapsing thousands of mud-and-straw dwellings as their occupants slept.

In addition to the dead, at least 289 people were hurt, many by their collapsing roofs, officials said. Authorities have released no financial estimate of the damage.

Workers cleared roads of debris Friday to bring in aid, while helicopters flew supplies to remote areas. Feeding and medical stations were set up for children and old people.

Officials have appealed for blood donations, food, milk for children and blankets. They have warned that drinking water could soon be a short supply in the drought-stricken region.

No international request for aid has been launched, and two French medical relief

agencies overburdened with the Rwanda crisis said they would await one before deciding whether to help out.

Medecins Sans Frontieres said that if a team was sent, strong security guarantees would be demanded to ensure their safety from Islamic rebels, who have killed 58 foreigners in the past year.

Another French agency, Secours Populaire Francais, sent a small team to liaise with local charities and expressed the hope that gunmen would not kill aid workers.

The rebels hope to isolate and topple the country's military-backed regime, installed in a coup that robbed a Muslim fundamentalist party of election victory in January 1992.

Authorities decided that only the Red Crescent would be authorised to collect and ship gifts for quake victims after Islamic extremists organised relief operations in the wake of a deadly earthquake in Tipaza in 1989.

The Tipaza aid operations are believed to have helped the since-outlawed Islamic Salvation Front sweep local elections in June 1990.

In Paris, the FIS called on the people of Algeria and "mujahideen" fighters to assist the victims of the earthquake.

Lawyer named Lesotho premier

MASERU (Agencies) — Human rights lawyer Hae Phooilo was Friday sworn in as chairman of a provisional council to rule Lesotho for the next 12 months following a "royal coup" in which Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle was ousted.

At a ceremony conducted by Chief Justice Lebonts Kheola at the royal palace here, five other members of the council, all appointed Friday by King Letsie III, were also sworn in.

Among them was the leader of the opposition Basotho National Party (BNP), Everest Sekhonyana, who was named foreign minister.

Mr. King Letsie, who suspended sections of the constitution and dissolved parliament on Wednesday, presided over the brief ceremony but made no comments.

According to Mr. Phooilo, King Letsie had assumed executive and legislative powers and was now effective head of state. Previously he was merely a constitutional monarch.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, a solemn Phooilo said the occasion was "not one to be joyous about." "I came in at a very difficult time, when peace and tranquility in Lesotho was at its lowest ebb," he said. "It is our task to try and bring peace and stability in the country."

A statement read by U.N. spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Bertrand Labarsouque said the soldier was "fatally wounded by a direct hit aimed through an aperture in his observation post."

Investigators have not yet determined where the shot was fired from but the killer must have been no more than 200 metres away, he added.

Another spokesman, Roh Annink, said meanwhile that the investigation launched early Friday to determine which side blasted the airport runway with a mortar on Thursday afternoon had been completed, but would give no

details. "The military option is discussed, but we do not want to concentrate on military methods to end the situation," he said at a news conference.

The airport was reopened to military planes but the civilian airfield to the southern capital remained closed. That has caused a severe

Argentina blast probe is stalled

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies) — Argentine prosecutors probing for new leads to last month's bomb blast that killed nearly 100 people at a Jewish centre in Buenos Aires have returned home from Paraguay empty-handed.

"No link was found" Argentine's ambassador to Paraguay Raul Carigano told a radio station.

The prosecutors had hoped to get firm leads on the identity of the bombers after evidence provided by a key witness linking Iran to the bombing was thrown into doubt.

They flew to Paraguay Wednesday after Paraguayan authorities, with the help of Interpol, arrested a Lebanese national Friday who the local media said could be involved in the attack.

The man said he could provide evidence about the blast, but investigations led to a dead end.

Iran has repeatedly denied any participation in the attack.

About 4,000 people marched to a courthouse Thursday to demand justice in the bomb attack and to honour the dead.

So far, only one person has been detained: Carlos Telleldin, 33, an Argentine who owned the minivan used in the July 18 bombing. He has been charged with falsifying the auto's paperwork, but is not accused of any role in the attack.

The subject of who hopped the car is one taking-off point. But from there, the link in the chain is cut off, Ruben Beraja, president of the Delegation of Jewish Argentine Associations, told the newspaper Pagina 12.

A federal judge ordered four Iranians detained for questioning and named three Iranian diplomats as suspects Aug. 11.

But the legal proceedings have since ground to a halt. Under Argentine law, the supreme court handles cases involving foreign diplomats, but the court has not yet decided to take over the investigation from federal Judge Juan Jose Galeano.

Mr. Beraja praised Judge Galeano for his firm commitment, but said the magistrate had come up with "very few results" so far.

Mr. Galeano last week set off a major diplomatic crisis with Iran after issuing international arrest warrants for four Iranian officials who a witness linked to the attack.

But Mr. Galeano's whole case was based on evidence provided by Manouchehr Motamer, a disaffected Iranian whose credentials as a witness have since been thrown into doubt.

Iranian Ambassador Hadi Soleimani was threatened by President Carlos Menem with expulsion, left Argentina after his embassy, in a press statement, accused Mr. Galeano of building his case on the testimony of "unreliable or politically biased sources."

But Mr. Soleimani told reporters on arrival at Tehran's Mehrabad airport Thursday that his return did not mean the severance of Tehran-Buenos Aires diplomatic ties, Iran's RINA news agency said.

Tehran Radio quoted Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati Thursday as saying Argentina was under U.S. and Israeli pressure in its dispute with Tehran over the bombing and urged it to act independently.

Mr. Velayati, quoted by Tehran Radio, said Washington and Israel were the main source of "malevolent propaganda and imaginary charges" linking Iran to the bombing.

U.S. Ambassador to Argentina James Check said Wednesday the Clinton administration suspected an Iranian connection and added Washington would support Argentina if it decided to break diplomatic ties with Tehran.

But Argentine Foreign Minister Guido Di Tella Thursday reiterated the rural tranquility, but the sceptical caller refused to be placated: "No, we've seen it on the telly. It's a huge pop concert. There's no way we're coming this weekend, we couldn't put up with all the louts."

COLUMN 10

Queen praises Canada for balancing cultures

VICTORIA, British Columbia (R) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth II congratulated Canada for balancing its different cultures but skirted controversy over the possible secession of French-speaking Quebec.

"Since its creation this country, to a greater degree than most other nations, had to take up the challenge of integrating different cultures without putting them in the same mould," the queen told guests at a state dinner.

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